

## Geochemical and Environmental Research Group (GERG)

John N. Walpert, Senior Research Associate-Technical Lead  
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February 24, 2014

Tom Wheeler, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 Twelfth Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: *Revision of Part 15 of the Commission's Rules*  
ET Docket No. 13-49

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

I am Senior Research Associate and Technical Lead at the Geochemical and Environmental Research Group. The Geochemical and Environmental Research Group (GERG) is a center of excellence in applied geosciences within the College of Geosciences at Texas A&M University. One of our responsibilities here at GERG is the operation of the Texas Automated Buoy System (TABS). TABS consists of nine ocean observing buoy systems strategically deployed along the Texas coast from the TX/LA border down to the border with Mexico. These buoys collect real-time data on near surface ocean currents, wind speed and direction, wave climate, water temperature, salinity, barometric pressure, air temperature, etc. We report this information to the Texas General Land Office in order to support oil spill prevention and response activities. This system provides near real time data for oil spill trajectory models so managers can direct resources to the proper areas in the event of an offshore oil spill. This system is the only one of its kind currently in operation and has saved millions of dollars and countless man-hours due to the emergency response value of the data it provides.

Since 2001, TABS has operated with Globalstar packet data modems as its primary means of communication. The real-time observational data being collected by these buoys is transmitted to the Texas General Land Office and loaded into computer models in order to provide an accurate forecast of current conditions off the Gulf Coast of Texas.

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We have just been informed that the FCC is currently considering unlicensed devices to operate in the 5 GHz spectrum currently licensed to Globalstar. GERG would like to make it clear to the FCC how important it is that Globalstar devices be protected from any harmful interference. Our ability to protect both people and the environment from oil spills relies on the data being provided through the Globalstar modems located on our buoys. We hope the FCC ensures that proper safeguards are put in place to safeguard Globalstar devices from interference so that we can continue to provide our current level of high quality data and emergency response services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Walpert".

John Walpert  
Sr. Research Associate, Technical Lead  
Geochemical and Environmental Research Group  
Texas A&M University